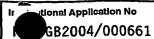
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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC 7 A22C13/00 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC 7 A22C Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used) EPO-Internal C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT Category \* Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages Relevant to claim No. P,X WO 03/017770 A (DEVRO PLC; MARTIN GORDON 1-21 DAVID ; MORGAN TREVOR (GB); NORWOOD DEREK SAM) 6 March 2003 (2003-03-06) page 1, lines 1-5 page 4, lines 1-3 page 5, lines 9-16 examples 3,4 US 6 482 240 B1 (GEISTLICH PETER ET AL) Α 1-21 19 November 2002 (2002-11-19) column 1, lines 27-32 column 2, lines 49-58 claim 1 A US 4 196 223 A (SHANK JOSEPH L) 1 - 211 April 1980 (1980-04-01) the whole document -/--Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. Patent family members are listed in annex. Special categories of cited documents: "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the \*A\* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier document but published on or after the international "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such docu-"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means ments, such combination being obvious to a person skilled \*P\* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "&" document member of the same patent family Date of the actual completion of the international search Date of mailing of the international search report 19 May 2004 28/05/2004 Name and mailing address of the ISA Authorized officer European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl.

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